

NEWMYER HOUSE & BARN  
3165 Richey Road  
Pennsville vicinity  
Fayette County  
Pennsylvania

HABS PA-6739  
*PA-6739*

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

# HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

## NEWMYER HOUSE AND BARN

HABS No. PA-6739

LOCATION: 3165 Richey Road, Pennsville, Fayette County, Pennsylvania.

DATE OF  
CONSTRUCTION: Ca. 1794 barn, ca. 1820 house

PRESENT OWNER: Anthony and Rosemary Mucha

SIGNIFICANCE: The ca. 1794 barn is one of western Pennsylvania's oldest surviving stone barns. This type of Pennsylvania bank barn, known as a Sweitzer or Swiss barn, was commonly built into a hillside by eighteenth and nineteenth century Germans with an earthen ramp to the haymow. Sweitzer or Swiss barns also featured a projecting frame forebay, slit ventilators in the stone gable wall, and a saltbox roof shape. This Newmyer Barn also illustrates the phenomenon that different ethnic groups borrowed building techniques from one another during this period. By using an English roofing system atop an essentially Germanic barn, the barn epitomizes the fusion of European building customs prevalent in late eighteenth century western Pennsylvania.

DESCRIPTION: The Newmyer Barn is built into the hillside with stone gable end walls, pierced by slit ventilators, and has a projecting forebay on the west, downhill side. It measures 60'-7" x 35'-3", plus appendages. The uncut stone gable end wall features a quoin-like pattern on the corners. On the northeast corner, the stone wall extends to accommodate a granary. There is a wood-framed hay storage shed appendage on the southeast corner. Beneath the cantilevered forebay, there is a frame store room addition on the north end, and a hanging feed bin in the center, both added in the mid-twentieth century. The barn roof consists of heavier principle rafters (every fourth one) that have braces tenoned into them. The braces support a series of three lighter rafters that in turn support the roof. This system helps to stabilize the end walls as well as support the roof. A concrete block milk house addition is attached at the lower level to the south end of the barn.

Uphill from the barn are several nineteenth century farm buildings, including a wood frame straw/hay shed, a wood frame corn crib, a stone smokehouse, a stone springhouse, a coal shanty, a wood frame wheat shed, and a brick tenant house (used as the milk house before building the concrete block addition in 1960).

The Newmyer House sits on a stone foundation, and measures 42'-7" x 31'-6". The five-bay façade features a central door with a fanlight and fine detailing. A shed roof covers the front porch, which is supported by round aluminum posts. There is Flemish bond brickwork on the front façade and common bond on the gable ends, with chimneys at either end.

HISTORY:

The barn is a rare survivor of Germanic agricultural tradition found in western Pennsylvania, much of which was transformed by coal mining and iron and steel production in the nineteenth century. Peter Newmyer emigrated to western Pennsylvania from Germany around 1750. Over the next fifty years, he accumulated over 400 acres for his farm, most of it from the vast estate of ironmaster Isaac Meason (see HABS No. PA-5475). He built his barn ca. 1794, a much more substantial structure than his home, a two-story log house. His son, Jonathan, purchased the farm from his father over time. The Federal-style house was built ca. 1820, replacing the earlier log house. Over time the Newmyer House became the center of the social and religious life for the Pennsville Baptist community. The Newmyer family sold the property after 1869. Antoni and Anna Mucha purchased it in 1922, and their grandson, Anthony Mucha, and his wife, Rosemary, now own it.

SOURCES:

Brown, Eliza Smith and Ronald Carlisle, PhD. *Newmyer, Peter and Jonathan, Farm*. Washington, D.C.: National Register Form, 1998.

Donnelly, Lu, H. David Brumble, IV, and Franklin Toker. *Buildings of Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, forthcoming.

Ensinger, Robert F. *The Pennsylvania Barn: Its Origin, Evolution, and Distribution in North America*, Second Edition. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

Stotz, Charles Morse. *The Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1936.

HISTORIAN:

Christopher H. Marston, HAER Architect, 2007

PROJECT

INFORMATION:

This short-form history was prepared to supplement photographic documentation of historic sites in western Pennsylvania. In 2005 Nicholas Traub photographed several sites for the *Buildings of Western Pennsylvania* publications, with funding from HABS/HAER/HALS. The

Society of Architectural Historians cosponsored the photography project and is producing two volumes, *Buildings of Pittsburgh* and *Buildings of Pennsylvania: Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania* as part of their *Buildings of the United States* series published by the University of Virginia Press. The documentation was facilitated by Lu Donnelly, Project Director, Buildings of Western Pennsylvania, for the Heinz Architectural Center at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. The documentation was edited and transmitted in the Washington office of HABS/HAER/HALS by Christopher H. Marston, HAER Architect.